



## Ethics: Can It Be Taught?

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5 April 2016

This research paper presented to the Defense Acquisition University for partial fulfillment of the academic requirements for the Army's Senior Service College Fellowship (SSCF) under the direction of SSCF Director, John Daniels, and Research Advisor Gordon Hagewood.

Distribution Statement A, Approved for Public Release, 11 April 2016,  
U.S. Army Materiel Command Public Affairs

**Approval Page**

Title: Ethics: Can It Be Taught?

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Organization: DAU-South, Senior Service College Fellowship (SSCF)

Date of Paper: 5 April 2016

Informed Consent Forms: Not required

Research Advisor [Gordon Hagewood] Approval Date: 5 April 2016

Second Reviewer [Dana Stewart] Approval Date: 21 March 2016

SSCF Director [John Daniels] Approval Date: 5 April 2016

OPSEC Approval Date: 11 April 2016

Approval for Public Release Date: 11 April 2016

Date Submitted for Journal Publication:

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my wife for her continued sacrifices in support of my professional endeavors, a debt that I can never repay. I would also like to acknowledge the men and women in multiple agencies that freely provided their subject matter expertise that helped guide the direction and shape the outcome of this study.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

List of Figures.....	6
Abstract.....	7
Introduction	
Background.....	8
Problem Statement.....	9
Literature Review.....	10
Research Methodology	
Overview.....	24
Literature Review.....	24
Studies and Survey.....	25
Analysis.....	25
Limitations.....	25
Data Analysis and Findings	
Reconciling Army Ethics to Meet Objectives for National Security.....	26
Developing Effective Ethical Leaders.....	28
Challenges to Developing Army Leaders with Better Capability for Ethical Reasoning and Decision-Making.....	36
Teaching Ethical Reasoning and Decision-Making.....	40
Monitoring and Measuring the Effectiveness of Ethics Training and Education.....	50
Conclusion & Recommendations	
Conclusions.....	55
Recommendations.....	64

References.....	67
Acronyms.....	75
Disclaimer.....	78

**List of Figures**

Figure 1:	Characteristics of Leader Effectiveness.....	30
Figure 2:	Perception of Leaders Maintaining High Standards of Honesty and Integrity.....	31
Figure 3:	Perception That Senior Leaders Would Take Action on a Reported Ethical Violation.....	32
Figure 4:	Civilian Ratings of Trust by Relationship Level.....	33
Figure 5:	Soldiers and Marines' Perception of Duty at Abu Ghraib Prison.....	38
Figure 6:	The Neuroanatomy of Morality.....	41
Figure 7:	Kohlberg's Three Stage Theories of Development.....	43
Figure 8:	General Ethics in the Federal Acquisition Profession.....	45
Figure 9:	Perception of the Magnitude to Which Ethical Behavior Must be Controlled.....	46
Figure 10:	Changes in Decision Making Due to Training.....	48
Figure 11:	Changes to Metacognitive Reasoning Strategy Due to Training.....	49
Figure 12:	Feedback Loop.....	52

### **Abstract**

The Army Tank- automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM), Program Executive Office Ground Combat Support Systems (PEO GCSS) leadership asked the question “Can Ethics Be Taught?” To this over-simplified question, the answer is yes. The Department of Defense already has a compliance-based ethics program. In fact, there is extensive coverage on teaching ethics in terms of leadership development and decision-making throughout both public and private research and literature. Teaching ethical reasoning and decision-making is a broader question that requires consideration of whether ethics taught is really ethics learned, and, then, how the Army ensures that ethics learned is ethics practiced. Dr. Travis Bradberry (2015) provides a distinction between intelligence—the ability to learn—and emotional intelligence as the capability to learn and improve by practice a flexible set of skills. Gaining insight into how individuals who are trained in leadership and decision-making, i.e., learned in the foundations and concepts of ethics, can lead to an understanding of how these same people can still end up in a dilemma of unethical proportions, i.e., without the skills to make an ethical decision in a challenging situation. Training ethical behavior in terms of what not to do is not enough. Ethics is about making choices, recognizing competing obligations, understanding the “whys” of behavior, and developing the skills to exercise moral reasoning and apply ethical judgment. Yes, the Army can teach ethics. Yes, Army leadership can acquire knowledge in ethical reasoning and decision-making. However, without means and ability to execute, sustain, and reinforce a rigorous ethics education and training program that resonates with all military and civilian components, the practicing of ethics will always be a challenge.

## Introduction

### Background

Twenty-five hundred years ago, Aristotle and Plato both connected human virtue to morality by way of how people choose to live. Where they differed, though, was in how people acquire virtue, and thus morality. While Plato would argue that the roots of virtue and morality begin with wisdom, Aristotle would counter with the need to habituate oneself to virtue. Simply put, Plato believed that to know morality is to have morality, while Aristotle believed that man needed to practice morality in order to have it (Allred, 2011). By the twelfth century, the chivalric code entitled a moral system of warrior ethos, knightly piety, and courtly manners (Chivalry, 2016). This concept of honor, today, forms the foundation of the Army values and ethos. The Army values and ethos, in turn, is the mantle of trust in leadership. However, the modern information age complicates the practice of virtue and honor. The mere perception of a violation of honor . . . a violation of trust . . . takes no more time than a tweet, Facebook post, or release of a *You-Tube* video to be career ending.

John M. McHugh, former Secretary of the Army, stated:

As trusted Army professionals, we strive to be honorable military experts, and servants, and stewards of the Army – as a professional institution – and do the right thing by the people who are entrusted to us . . . That is our identity. That is who we claim we are . . . As we practice this profession we must uphold the Army ethic, and reflect a common understanding of why we serve and how we serve in defense of the American people (Lopez, 2014).



**Problem Statement**

The Army Tank- automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM), Program Executive Office Ground Combat Support Systems (PEO GCSS) leadership asked the question “Can Ethics Be Taught?” This is an over-simplified question to a complex condition. The United States (US) Department of Defense (DoD) Standards of Conduct Office (SOCO) has a plethora of resources available on ethics (Department of Defense General Counsel, 2016). The Office of the Army General Counsel provides easy access to live and online training (Office of the Army General Counsel, 2015). The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USDAT&L) even issued a directive making annual ethics training mandatory for all acquisition workforce members (Kendall, Mandatory Annual Ethics Training for the Defense Acquisition Workforce, 2014). The Army already teaches ethics. Yet, ethical lapses in judgment still plague the Army and end up the subject of front-page media coverage (Allen, 2015).

Given that the Army already teaches ethics, this research paper explores whether ethics taught is actually ethics learned, and, then, how can the Army ensure that ethics learned becomes ethics practiced. This discussion is not complete without also exploring the Army’s ability and capability to sustain ethical decision-making and behavior. Thus, measuring performance and progress toward improvement and achieving established goals is critical. Determining the adequacy of current metrics to indicate that the level of education, training, and experiences are sufficient to drive unethical behavior down ensures that ethics practiced is ethics sustained.

### **Literature Review**

A literature review on the topic of ethics involves a summary and synthesis of a variety of collateral and complementary topics. The research includes a sampling of literature, research, and studies, and an objective assessment of selected initiatives the Army and others are implementing today to educate and train on the practice of ethical decision-making. The research identifies areas where improvement could occur to meet the myriad of future Army dilemmas and its ability to make timely ethical decisions and win in a complex global environment.

### **National Security Strategy**

Within the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS), the President sets forth both a vision and a strategy to promote universal values. To accomplish the vision and strategy, the Army must hold itself to the highest standards and live the values at home (Office of the President of the United States, 2015).

### **National Military Strategy**

The 2015 National Military Strategy (NMS) is the platform in which the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) identified their priorities, including the imperative within the Army profession to develop leaders of competence, character, and consequence. The Army needs both military and civilian leaders of the highest caliber to innovate, optimize decision-making, and advance military capabilities to execute globally integrated operations and achieve national military objectives. By promoting ethical leadership, promoting a climate of professionalism and accountability, the Army can execute a campaign of trust that strengthens the military family and avoids high-risk behavior (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015).

**Army Strategic Planning Guidance**

The 2014 Army Strategic Planning Guidance (ASPG) outlined five strategic objectives for the Army, based on the foundation built by the NSS and the NMS. Of these objectives, two specifically identify ethics in the end goal for soldiers and civilians to prevail in peace and war and earn the trust of the American people (Department of the Army (Army Strategic Planning Guidance), 2014).

**Win in a Complex World: The U.S. Army Operating Concept**

The Army Operating Concept (AOC) further stratifies these objectives by linking the required leadership capabilities—resiliency, adaptability, and cohesiveness demonstrated in their commitment to the Army professional ethic—with today’s warfighting challenges inherent in uncertain and persistently dangerous environments (U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2014).

**Army Strategic Readiness**

Army Strategic Readiness (ASR) regulation (Army Regulation (AR) 525-30) refers to the Army’s current and future readiness “as an institution” (Department of the Army (Army Regulation 525-30), 2014, p. 2) to support the NMS. The regulation lays out a process of measuring performance; assessing leading indicators and strategic levers; and mitigating challenges to strategic readiness tenets (SRT) to ensure a ready force. Training is one of the six SRTs, and refers to the ability to conduct unit and individual, as well as functional, professional and leader development training. Capacities and capabilities is another of the SRTs that address the trained and ready forces in terms of meeting current, projected and surge demands for executing the NMS (Department of the Army (Army Regulation 525-30), 2014).

**Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure**

The Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure is a collection of vignettes that describe standards of conduct violations resulting from a breakdown in ethical decision-making. This encyclopedia provides a quick reference guide “to sensitize Federal employees to the reach and impact of Federal ethics statutes and regulations” (U.S. Department of Defense Standards of Conduct Office, 2015, p. 3).

**Ethics and Acquisition Professionalism: It is All About Trust**

The Honorable Frank Kendall, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, wrote in a 2014 article about trust in terms of integrity and credibility. Mr. Kendall makes the point that the appearance or perception of unethical conduct is a by-product of unethical reasoning and decision-making. The appearance or perception of unethical conduct, in turn, directly influences integrity and credibility and, thus, effectiveness. (Kendall, Ethics and Acquisition Professionalism: It is All About Trust, 2014)

**Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow**

Part 3 of Tom Rath and Barry Conchie’s 2008 book delves into the symbiotic relationship between a leader and a follower to focus on understanding why people follow. The key question “What leader has the most positive influence in your daily life?” (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 80) netted three words that respondents (referred to as followers) cited as best describing what this person contributes to their life. In short, trust, compassion, stability, and hope are the four basic needs that followers seek and recognize in influential leaders.

**Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It**

James Kouzes and Barry Posner (2011) discuss what values, personal traits, or characteristics followers look for in terms of their relationship with superiors, and conclude that

four crucial attributes contribute to a leader's credibility: honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, and competency (Kouzes & Posner, *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*, 2011). *Credibility* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) is an exploration of six key disciplines, or steps a leader can follow, that will strengthen a leader's capacity for earning and sustaining credibility (Kouzes & Posner, *The Complete Summary: Credibility*, 2011).

### **Leader Development**

Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Leader Development* (Department of the Army (Field Manual 6-22), 2015), outlines the fundamental principles that allow leaders to accomplish their mission objectives and care for their people. Chapter 5, on Unique Aspects for Development, specifically defines character as embodying moral and ethical qualities. Having character is critical to success as an Army leader. Character, as an individual attribute, is essential for determining right from wrong and motivating a leader to make good choices in the face of difficult situations. However, building and sustaining character require continual experience, education, and self-development. Developing high caliber leaders of character requires the ability to "correctly identify the ethical implications of a decision, [possess] knowledge to act, and [act] accordingly." (DA (FM 6-22), 2015, pp. 5-1). Simply, leaders have the responsibility to establish and maintain an ethical climate that nurtures development of character and inspires others to act ethically.

### **2014 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Army Military Leader Findings Technical Report 2015-01**

The Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) employs sampling, data collection, and analysis to study and report annually on the quality of Army leadership activities. The CASAL reports include perspectives on effectiveness of leader

development experiences, and trends as a dependable source for informed decision-making and course correction (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman, Fallesen, and Gunther, 2014).

### **2014 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Army Civilian Leader Findings Technical Report 2015-02**

Since 2009, CASAL has conducted a companion survey of Department of the Army quality of Army civilian personnel leadership activities (Riley, Hatfield, Fallesen, and Gunther, 2014).

### **2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, Employees Influencing Change**

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) first administered the viewpoint survey in 2002, and has since published reports generated from the bi-annual surveys. In 2014, nearly 400,000 full-time, part-time, permanent, non-seasonal federal employees participated in the survey. The participants represented 37 departments and large agencies plus 45 small and independent agencies, and comprised approximately 97% of the Executive Branch civilian workforce. OPM asked these participants to respond to a series of questions on a variety of topics, including standards of honesty and integrity in senior leadership.

### **Level Three Leadership: Getting Below the Surface**

James G. Clawson (2006) considers leadership to be a phenomenon that is not isolated; rather, leadership exerts the influence of other aspects of organizational life, strategy, and managing change, in particular. To these three primary domains, Clawson added ethics. Power and influence shape leadership, thus, every leadership situation becomes an ethical situation made up of a series of questions for the leader to address in order to exercise this influence. The relationship between leader and follower takes on significant moral and ethical dimensions.

**Ethics in Program Management**

In a 2007 article, Dr. Owen Gaden used examples of recent ethics scandals from both the government and industry to discuss the failure in common approaches for addressing ethical dilemmas. These failures arise from leadership not taking responsibility for creating an organizational climate and culture conducive to adequately aligning values and shaping ethical behavior. Supporting the Leader Development (FM 6-22) model, character in ethical decision-making directly relates to resolving value conflicts.

**The Warrior's Way-A Treatise on Military Ethics**

Richard Gabriel's 2007 book takes a firm stance on ethical reasoning as a foundation for the precepts, values, and obligations that set the military profession apart from any other social construct. Using a point-counter-point approach, Gabriel details and refutes numerous perceptual challenges to the need for a code of ethics, and reaches the conclusion that application of an ethical code is the only path to achieving battlefield success without risking loss of humanity. Situations that present increasing challenges to exercising ethical judgment serve as a catalyst for temptation to abandon that same judgment. Thus, the responsibility for developing, teaching, and practicing a code of ethics falls squarely on the shoulders of the military. Failure to accept this responsibility puts members of the military at risk for failure to exercise ethical judgment.

**Finding "The Right Way": Toward an Army Institutional Ethic**

Clark C. Barrett's 2012 research paper argued that the abstract attention the Army pays to ethics has led to what Gabriel (2007) referred to as abandonment of ethical judgment. Citing research data from three consecutive years of Military Health Advisory Team (MHAT) reports, Barrett puts the perceptions of soldiers and marines executing their duties at Abu Ghraib prison

into perspective. The solution: provide clear direction and guidance on promulgating, training, explaining, and establishing the means to self-govern both the individual and institutional Army ethic.

### **The Army Officer's Professional Ethic-Past, Present, and Future**

Colonel Matthew Moten focused his 2010 research paper on the state of ethics in the Army today, and reached some sobering and provocative conclusions. Turning to the future of the Army, Moten argued that the Army officer corps needs a concise statement of ethical values to codify the diffuse understanding that existed in the past. A clear statement of the Army officers' professional ethic is especially necessary in a time when the Army, as an institution, has over-stretched and over-stressed itself. This clear statement would come in the form of a written code focused on moral and ethical, not legal, requirements of the profession. This code should be inspirational and represent an aspirational approach to better behavior rather than a list of offenses.

### **Semi-Annual Report to the Congress, April 1, 2015 to September 30, 2015**

According to the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) Semi-Annual Report to the Congress, whistleblower reprisal ranks as a "priority 2" DoD Hotline issue (on a scale of 1-3 in the priority referral process) that requires an expedited processing / referral within three days. This report contained data on the Whistleblower Reprisal Investigation (WRI) Directorate investigations and conduct of oversight reviews of investigations by the Military Service and Defense agency IGs into allegations of whistleblower reprisal. During the period of 1 April through 30 September 2015, the DoDIG reported having issued an update to DoD Directive 7050.06, "Military Whistleblower Protection", and amendments to law that expand



compliant filing periods to one year as well as broaden protected communications and activities scope (Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, 2015).

### **Whistleblower Protection: DoD Needs to Enhance Oversight of Military Whistle Blower Reprisal Investigations (GAO-15-477)**

The Government Accountability Office (GAO)'s 2015 Whistleblower Protection report stated that whistleblowing presented military personnel with an ethical dilemma: reporting fraud, waste, and abuse outside of the chain of command directly contradicts military doctrine and potentially puts the whistleblower at risk for reprisal. Statutory notification and completion of whistleblower reprisal investigations, and investigation oversight requirements, provide a degree of protection against reprisal toward whistleblowers. The report reviewed the Department of Defense's (DoD) procedures for meeting these statutory requirements with respect to investigations regarding military personnel being restricted from communications with either Congress or an IG. The findings assert that DoD does not have an effective system in place to meet these requirements, with a potential result of fewer reports of wrongdoing presenting an impediment to ethical decision-making (Government Accountability Office (GAO-15-477), 2015).

### **Transforming Ethics in Government Contracting**

William Curry began a 2010 article with an assumption that the majority of government officials and contractors act from a position of honesty and dedication to serving the public, but admitted that ethical principles have failed. Limiting the discussion to policies on gratuities within government contracting, Curry seems to be saying that practices of establishing acceptable gratuity thresholds and attempting to enforce zero tolerance for ethical violation are both contradictory and in themselves compelling both government and contractor personnel

toward violation. Rather than turning attention to training or educating personnel to make ethical decisions, Curry prescribes incentivizing adherence to the very ethical standards that these personnel already possess (Curry, 2010).

### **The Ethical Executive: Becoming Aware of the Root Causes of Unethical Behavior**

Robert Hoyk and Paul Hersey (2008) define ethical traps as those situations that create an illusion and distortion of perceptions of right and wrong; that allow people to weave an internal web of self-deception to the point of actually rationalizing, however incrementally, unethical behavior into something right. Hoyk and Hersey reasoned that learning to recognize and be aware of the illusive nature of these traps could ensure people have the ability to identify the danger ahead of time, prepare for it, and perhaps prevent it altogether. Each of the 45 traps described by Hoyk and Hersey provides a challenge to ethical behavior and are instructive to informing ethical decision-making (Hoyk & Hersey, 2008).

### **How does morality work in the brain?**

In a 2013 article, Pascual, Rodrigues, and Gallardo-Pujol summarize their exhaustive study on the scientific history of neuroscience. The research objective was to identify those areas of the brain that are, structurally and functionally, associated with morality and provide recommendations on further study of morality from a neuroscience perspective (Pascual & Gallardo-Pujol, 2013).

### **Your Brain at Work**

David Rock (2009) takes the reader into the brains of two fictional characters on a journey to learn how to prioritize, organize, and act on received information. In the book, Rock explores how to maximize the ability to find insights for solving what might otherwise be insurmountable problems (Rock, 2009).

**Emotional Intelligence – EQ is the Other Kind of Smart**

In a 2014 article, Dr. Travis Bradberry defines emotional intelligence (EQ) as the nexus of self-awareness and self-management (personal competence), and social awareness and relationship management (social competence). Dr. Bradberry asserts that EQ is the foundation for critical skills that affect how people manage behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions to achieve positive results. Dr. Bradberry further asserts that EQ could be that element which sets star performers apart from the rest of the pack by a factor of 70%. Dr. Bradberry introduces the concept that learning strategies can actually change the functioning of the brain--learning new strategies for increasing EQ leads to developing behavioral habits in a variety of areas including decision-making (Bradberry, 2015).

**Can Ethics Be Taught?**

In a 1987 article, Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, Meyer, and Meyer challenged the Wall Street Journal in a denouncement of ethics courses. Citing the research by the late Harvard psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg (Kohlberg, 2001), Velasquez et al. summarized the three levels of moral development, and tied education as one of the factors that stimulate progression through these levels to a person's capability for learning ethical reasoning (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, S.J., & Meyer, 1987).

**Searching for Honor in Federal Acquisition**

In a 2006 article, James Alstott and David Simon summarized the results of a 2005 web-based survey on ethics. The survey asked a range of ethics-related questions inspired by frequent media coverage of ethics failures in both the public and private sectors. The questions included respondents' perspective on moral authority, universal ethics concepts, changes to ethics over time, and organizational influence. Alstott and Simon's objective was to root out what factors

might affect ethics in the public sector and, specifically, in acquisition. The research categorized respondents in two key professional groups that experience interaction with the federal acquisition system, and a third “control” group of non-acquisition professionals invested in the pursuit of doctoral-level education (Alstott & Simon, 2006).

### **A Qualitative Approach to Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training**

#### **Development: Identification of Metacognitive Strategies**

In a 2007 study, Kligyte, Marcy, Sevier, Godfrey, and Mumford explored misconduct in the execution of scientific enterprise research and found the root in three factors key to the effectiveness of ethics education and Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training programs. These factors addressed the degree to which educational efforts link to day-to-day practice in the field, provide strategies for working through ethical dilemmas encountered in fieldwork, and are contained within broader programs for continuous career development. The common denominator in these three factors is an understanding that ethical decision-making must be within the context of what the Kligyte, Marcy, Sevier et al. term “sensemaking.” Sensemaking is the alignment of operative goals with ethical principles and professional standards. Where goals are misaligned with principals and standards, a sense of ambiguity, conflict, and/or crisis develops. This condition results in impaired emotional reaction to day-to-day dilemmas. To achieve resolution of dilemmas, individuals rely on learned sensemaking mechanisms. Kligyte, Marcy, Sevier et al. concluded that practical training programs must also include metacognitive strategies, i.e., higher order thinking and reasoning strategies, and tools to address those complex and ambiguous dilemmas—choosing right from wrong—and assist individuals in avoiding ethical decision-making based purely on emotion (Kligyte, Marcy, Sevier, Godfrey, & Mumford, 2007).

### **Application of a Sensemaking Approach to Ethics Training in the Physical Sciences and Engineering**

In a 2007 follow-on study, Kligyte, Marcy, Waples, Sevier, Godfrey, Mumford, and Hougen examined the influence that training, and trainee characteristics, have in applying metacognitive reasoning strategies and tools. The research attempted to assess effectiveness in applying RCR training that incorporates these strategies and tools to achieve enhanced research integrity. Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al. (2007) sought to answer the fundamental question of whether sensemaking-inspired training actually can affect underlying mental models that drive ethical decision-making. Study data led to the conclusion that sensemaking training is effective in shaping ethical decision-making capability, and extends throughout other disciplines with appropriate tailoring of activities and delivery technique (Kligyte, et al., 2007). Brock, Vert, Kligyte, Waples, Sevier, and Mumford conducted a second follow-on study in 2008 to validate sensemaking training conclusions (Brock, Vert, V., Sevier, & Mumford, 2008).

### **Harnessing the Power of Feedback Loops**

In a 2011 article, Thomas Goetz illustrates his concept of a feedback loop as an effective tool to change people's behavior using an experiment conducted in Garden Grove, California to get people to reduce speed limits in school zones. In a simple model, Goetz reasoned that, if people have real-time information about their actions, they have an opportunity to change and improve behavior. In the article, Goetz discussed four distinct stages of the feedback loop (Goetz, 2011).

### **Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-62)**

Public Law 103-62 codified the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) to resolve long-standing management problems. The Law refers to undermined

efficiency and effectiveness and decreases in results-accountability throughout the federal government. Among numerous requirements of the GPRA, executive agencies are required to measure performance and report progress toward achievement of annual goals against performance plans (One Hundred Third Congress of the United States of America, 1993).

**Managing for Results, Enhancing Agency Use of Performance Information for Management Decision Making (GAO-05-927)**

The GAO conducted a 2005 review of Federal agencies' performance planning and measurement progress toward meeting the goals of the GPRA. Findings included increases in performance measure reporting between 1997 and 2003, however, no change noted in the use of performance measures. The report specifically addressed agencies use of performance information to make better management decisions, and improvements to management decision-making, with recommendations for enhancing and facilitating use of performance information (Government Accountability Office (GAO-05-927), 2005).

**Panel on Contracting Integrity 2008 Report to Congress**

Commissioned under the auspices of Section 813 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, the DoD is required to submit an annual report on activities and accomplishments of a panel of senior leaders from a cross-section of the Department. Specifically, the report highlights those actions taken to eliminate vulnerabilities in defense contracting that result in fraud, waste, and abuse (Department of Defense Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L), 2009).

**United States Department of Defense Values-Based Ethics Program – Phase II****Recommendations for Program Design & Implementation**

Based on the Panel on Contracting Integrity 2008 Report to Congress recommendation to integrate a values-based ethics program with the existing rules-based compliance programs, the DoD contracted with EthicsOne Inc. and Ethics Resource Center in 2010 to execute a two-phase project. Phase I assessed the DoD ethics culture. Phase II encompassed recommendation on the transition to a holistic program and requirement to develop an associated training program complete with supporting materials. The contractors provided the final report to the Office of the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy in July 2012 (EthicsOne, Inc. & Ethics Resource Center, 2012).

**Military Personnel – Additional Steps are Needed to Strengthen DOD’s Oversight of Ethics and Professionalism Issues (GAO-15-711)**

In a 2015 report, GAO found that DoD established a management framework and initiatives for oversight of current ethics programs. However, these efforts lacked the strength and internal control capability to ensure proper accountability (Government Accountability Office (GAO-15-711), 2015).

**Corruption in the Procurement Process/Outsourcing Government Functions: Issues, Case Studies, Implications**

Nikos Passas (2007) presents a series of case studies that illustrate the “criminogenic environment,” an environment likely to cause criminal behavior created by an unprecedented reliance on the support of goods and services provided by private contractors to meet program needs in Iraq. The report largely focuses on providing examples of procurement fraud and corruption, and illustrating how a criminogenic environment results directly in both. Professor

Passas (2007) links procurement fraud back to national security and concludes the report with a series of policy recommendations. Specifically, these recommendations relate to ethics training, monitoring or assessing the adequacy of ethics programs, and tracking and reporting ethics violations (Passas, 2007).

## **Research Methodology**

### **Overview**

There is no shortage of research and analysis on the topic of ethics. Many preeminent experts and scholars have conducted a multitude of scientific reviews and studies, and written hundreds of articles and books in support of teaching ethics. The Army also has an ethics program, with many surveys and reports addressing training in ethics and ethical behavior. The intent of this paper is to link together existing research and analyses, and identify the gaps that prevent current ethics training programs from being successful. Viewing the question, and the source material, through a different lens should open the aperture on the topic of ethics in today's Army, as well as a more modern and complex Army environment in 2025.

### **Literature Review Focus and Approach**

The literature review focuses on the question Can Ethics Be Taught as it relates to leadership, Army in particular, and the decision-making thought process. The paper follows a progression across five broad categories of literature that, first, reflect on reconciling Army ethics to meet objectives for national security, the methodology for developing effective and ethical leaders, and challenges to developing Army leaders with better capability for ethical reasoning and decision-making. Then follows a discussion on teaching ethical reasoning and decision-making. Finally, the paper closes with considerations on monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of ethics training and education. When viewed as a system, understanding the



elements presented in these five categories can elicit output from which accomplishing actual change to behavior can occur and results are measured. The Army, then, has a mechanism to collect and analyze data, and feed it back into the system for continuous assessment and improvement--or evolution as the Army continues to position itself for 2025 and beyond. The literature review for this paper represents a select sample of studies, reports, and articles that address each of the five broad categories.

### **Studies and Surveys**

A number of studies and surveys exist, both outside and within the Army, that cross the spectrum of the five broad categories listed above. With the exception of an informal questionnaire developed for opening a discussion with the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE), data is readily available from these sources. Another or broader workforce surveys would not likely result in new or different data.

### **Analysis**

Finally, this paper includes additional analysis needed to construct these sources in such a way as to formalize a systematic approach to schooling the Army workforce, both military and civilian, in the performance of ethics in leadership and decision-making.

### **Limitations**

This paper considers data and information that originates from sources external to the Army as representative of the Army condition with respect to developing leadership capable of ethical reasoning and decision-making. GAO reports provide other service ethics related data; however, this data is limited and provided for cursory comparisons only. The Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE) responded to a questionnaire, intended for individual responses by all CAPE subject matter personnel, with a single informal and consolidated group

response. Further, the report uses existing statistical data from various reports and surveys, and assumes authenticity based on methodology and validation by the sponsoring organization. The United States Army Criminal Investigation Division (USACID) denied access to actual ethics case data sought through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request based on the sensitivity of information contained within the cases.

### **Data Analysis & Findings**

#### **Reconciling Army Ethics to Meet Objectives for National Security**

Discussion on ethics in leadership and decision-making begins with how the Army intends to address this topic to meet the requirements of the National Military Strategy, Army Strategic Planning Guidance, and the Army Operating Concept Force 2025 and Beyond. Understanding how ethics integrates the ends, ways, and means of our warfighting capability is key.

The National Security Strategy (2015) states that “a strong military is the bedrock of our national security . . . [and to] remain dominant in every domain . . . we will recruit and retain the best talent while developing leaders committed to an ethical and expert profession of arms” (Office of the President of the United States, 2015, p. 8). From this foundation, the National Military Strategy (2015) specifically identifies prioritizing leader development, including making ethical decisions, as one of six attributes of the “Joint leaders of tomorrow” (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015, p. 14). Promoting ethical leadership is a key component to evolving an organizational culture that not only produces creative, adaptive leaders, but also strengthens the people and profession of arms. The 2014 Strategic Planning Guidance (Department of the Army (Army Strategic Planning Guidance), 2014) further identifies five strategic priorities. Two of

these priorities, identified as Adaptive Army Leaders for a Complex World and Soldiers Committed to Our Army Profession, contain end goals specifically addressing ethics.

Why, then, is the topic of ethics within the Army still hot in terms of media attention and why does the United States Department of Defense Standards of Conduct Office feel the need to publish an encyclopedia of selected examples of actual ethical failures? In order to achieve strategic priorities for national security, the Army must effectively teach leaders to make ethical decisions. Specifically, leaders must “assess the status of strategic readiness tenets (SRTs); review the leading indicators that drive particular trends in readiness; and, ultimately, provide a strategic level assessment of the Army’s near-term (0-2 years) and future readiness (2-6 years)” (Department of the Army (Army Regulation 525-30), 2014, p. 2).

Frank Kendall, former Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, recently quoted one of his predecessors and former boss, John Betti: “The most valuable thing any one of us has is our credibility; once credibility is gone, it can never be recovered” (Kendall, *Ethics and Acquisition Professionalism: It is All About Trust*, 2014, p. 2). To that, Kendall added,

Credibility, or our capacity to have other people trust what we say, is essential to any successful acquisition professional. Trust in our credibility matters when we interact . . . with everyone we encounter . . . [and] sustaining trust in our integrity as public servants also demands that we be very careful about avoiding any appearance of unethical conduct (Kendall, *Ethics and Acquisition Professionalism: It is All About Trust*, 2014, p. 2)

Kendall’s position confers a status of authority representative of ethical behavior as a component of developing trust in an organization, and essential to effective leadership. In a

study conducted between 2005 and 2008 that included a random sampling of over 10,000 followers, trust was the number one need identified as basic to effective leadership (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

### **Developing Effective and Ethical Leadership**

Kouzes and Posner (2011) have studied leader attributes for over thirty years, finding that credibility is a foundational element of trust and, thus, effective leadership. Honesty is the one facet of credibility (incorporating truthfulness and trustworthiness, and having integrity and character) that Kouzes and Posner found consistently in the top four leading traits that people seek out and admire in leaders, and consider essential to effective leadership. “Credibility is earned by daily actions leaders take over time. It does not come automatically with the job or the title” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 21).

If effective leadership relies on the credibility of trusted leaders, then developing trusted leaders relies on building personal character, along with the competence to execute the mission and the commitment to Army values. Doing the right thing, in the right way, and for the right reasons—that is character. Character is also resisting the temptation to make a wrong decision because it is easier, quicker, or more personally advantageous, than the right one (Department of the Army (Field Manual 6-22), 2015).

The Army’s field manual on leadership development stated that, character, like credibility, “forms over time through education, training, and experience in a continuous, iterative process” (DA (FM 6-22), 2015, pp. 5-4). The FM further points to developing character in others and reinforcing ethical standards to promote an ethical climate.

Recurring data and trend analysis relating to developing ethical leaders to execute the Army’s strategy comes from two primary sources. The Center for Army Leadership Survey of

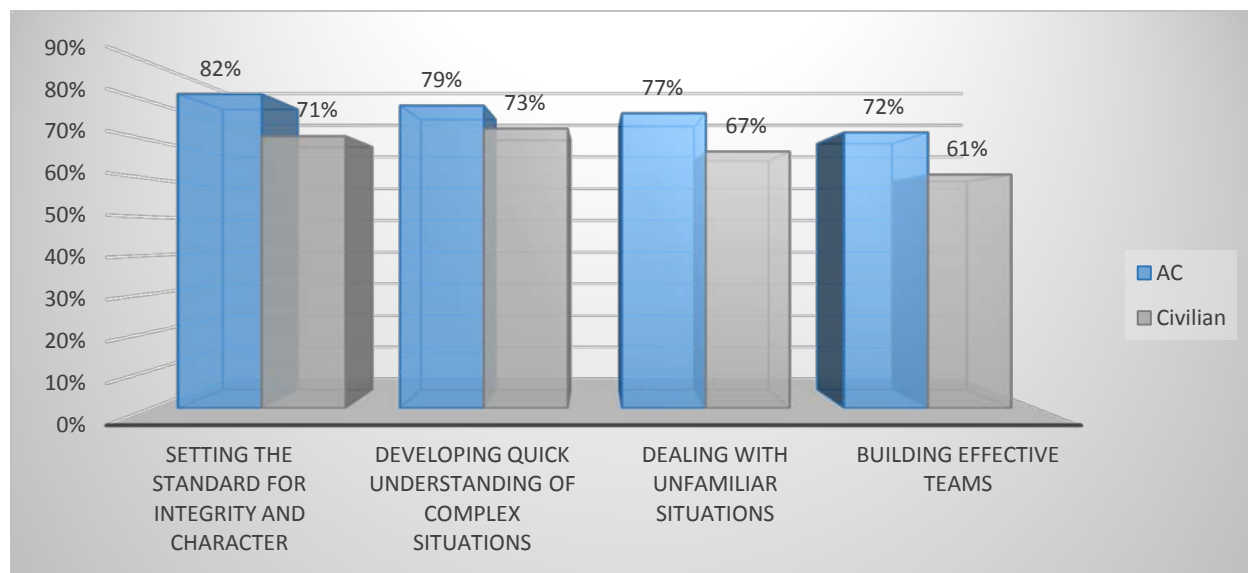
Army Leadership (CASAL) annual surveys (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman, Falleson & Gunther, 2014; Riley, Hatfield, Falleson & Gunther, 2014) focus on leaders' responsibility for establishing and maintaining an ethical climate, and leveraging that climate to further nurture, develop character, and inspire their subordinates to act ethically. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (Office of Personnel Management, 2015) contains a variety of questions to gauge civilian employees' satisfaction with their leadership. While CASAL derives data from surveys of Army military and civilian personnel and leadership, the OPM surveys more broadly reflect federal civilian employees and leadership.

The CASAL cited ethics in both its latest annual reports, Army Military Leader Findings (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014) and Army Civilian Leader Findings (Riley, Hatfield, Falleson et al., 2014), relative to characteristics of effective leadership and characteristics of the working environment. However, the two reports diverge on ethics with respect to trust where military personnel reflect on standards and discipline while civilian personnel perceive trust at the unit or organizational level. This paper presents a comparison of the data between military and civilian leadership findings from both reports, something CASAL does not do.

Across the two reports, characteristics of effective leadership include assessing immediate superior's ability and effectiveness at setting a standard for integrity and character. In both reports, setting the standard for integrity and character ranked highest among the seven military and nine civilian elements surveyed relating to characteristics of leader effectiveness by as much as a 16% margin. Within the single element of setting the standard for integrity and character, the active component (AC) military reports leadership as more favorable than civilian counterparts (see Figure 1) by an average of nearly ten percent. In both populations, survey responses represent a noticeable decline from leadership's individual ability to set the standards

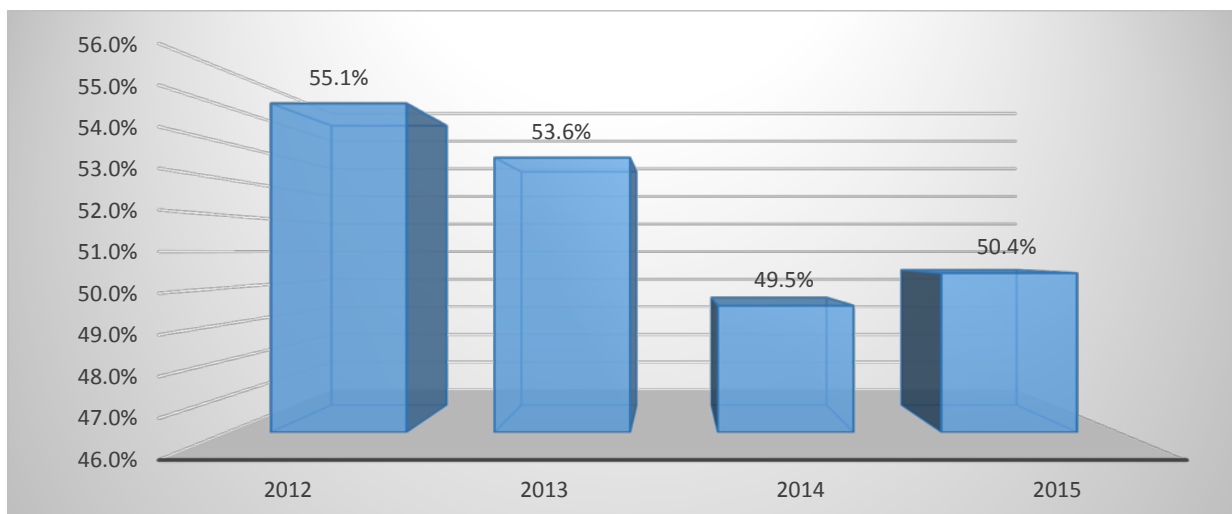
for integrity and character to active and influential capability to build effective teams based on those standards.

**Figure 1.** Characteristics of Leader Effectiveness (Hodges, 2016)



Coincidentally, OPM's 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, in response to the statement "my organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity" trend results (civilian employees only) show that positive responses increased only slightly (less than 1%) between 2014 and 2015, after a progressive three-year decline of 5.6% (Office of Personnel Management, 2015). Figure 2 illustrates these trends.

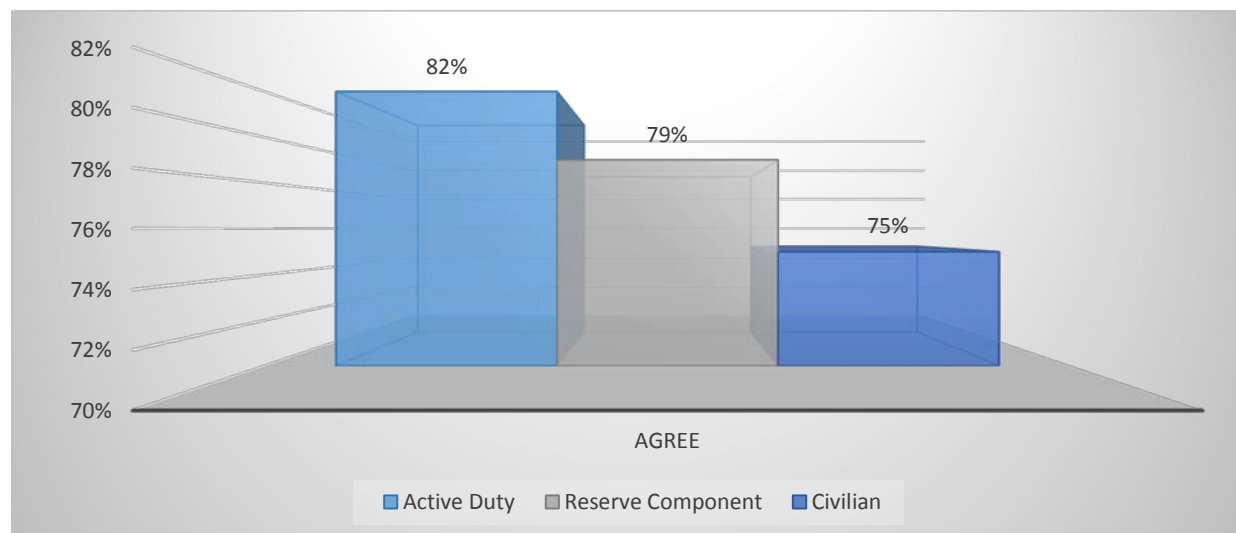
**Figure 2.** Perception of Leaders Maintaining High Standards of Honesty and Integrity (Hodges, 2016)



Ethics appears again in both CASAL reports in terms of characteristics of the working environment and perception of whether leaders would be likely to take action to address an ethical violation reported by a subordinate. Characteristics of the working environment reflect indicators of characteristics of units and organizations within the military report (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014) and indicators of organizational climate pertaining to the civilian survey population (Riley, Hatfield, Falleson et al., 2014).

Within the characteristics of effective units or organizations, CASAL surveyed AC, reserve component (RC), and civilian leaders on whether each of these groups agreed that senior leaders within the chain of command would take action to address an ethical violation. Note that responses applied only if a subordinate leader actually reported an ethical violation. Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al. noted that data on both military and civilian leadership trended upwards from the 2013 reports. Figure 3 shows a consistent trend downward from the AC, RC and civilian leaders' perception.

**Figure 3.** Perception That Senior Leaders Would Take Action on a Reported Ethical Violation (Hodges, 2016)



Though subtle, the report on Civilian Leader Findings (Riley, Hatfield, Falleson et al., 2014) links ethical conduct perceived by subordinates, peers, and superiors as contributory to positive work climates and trust. While, the report on Military Leader Findings (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014) refers back to leadership doctrine outlined in FM 6-22 to speak of trust with respect to facilitating relationships and encouraging follower commitment.

On the topic of trust, both surveys tie ethical conduct to promoting trust through a fostering of positive working climate and an adherence to standards, as well as application and enforcement of standards of conduct and discipline. On indicators of trust among members of a unit or organization, the military member perception at a broad level indicated 83% (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014) reporting high and very high levels of trust compared to only 45% of civilian counterparts (Riley, Hatfield, Falleson et al., 2014) reporting on the same measure.

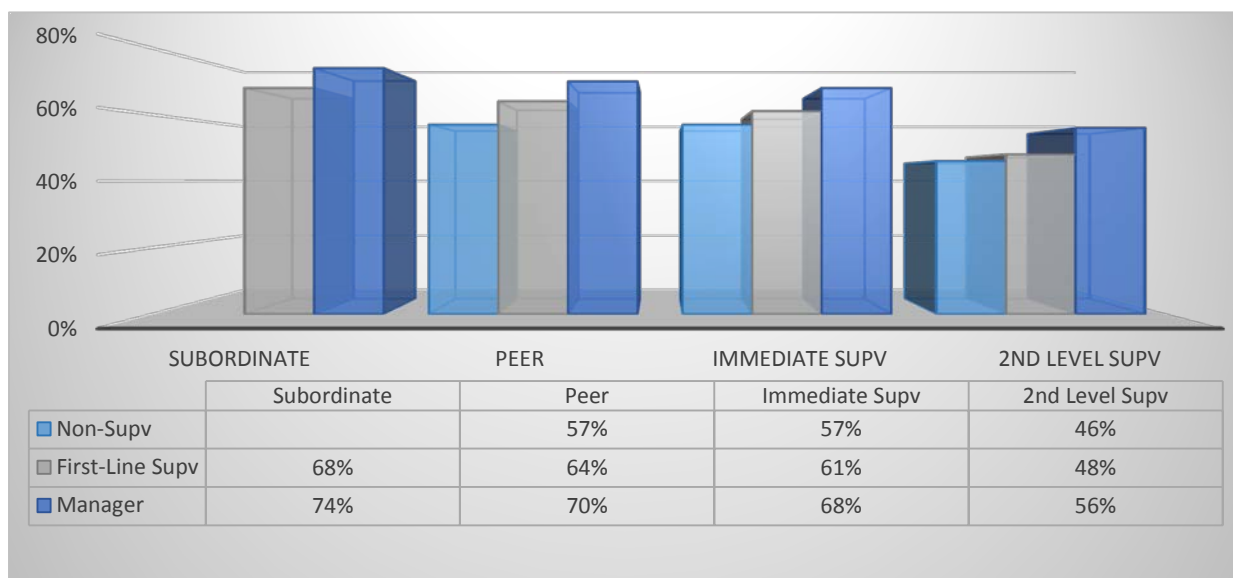
Drilling down to individual relationships between leaders and subordinates at various levels, the CASAL data on civilian leadership indicates higher levels of trust in subordinates



(68% and 74% for first-line supervisors and managers, respectively), peers (64% and 70%), and immediate supervisors (61% and 68%), with a significant lessening of trust in higher-level leadership (48% and 56%) (Riley, Hatfield, Falleson et al., 2014). Conversely, civilians in non-leadership positions typically rate peers and immediate supervisors significantly lower, and generally consistent with their own leadership's perception of higher-level leadership. Figure 4 illustrates this.

Alternatively, data on the military side indicates that 68% of active duty leaders rate their immediate supervisor as high or very high in trust. Subordinates rate their immediate supervisor as high or very high on a progressive scale of lowest perception of trust at 48% for Staff Sergeants to highest perception at 85% for General Officer (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014).

**Figure 4.** Civilian Ratings of Trust by Relationship Level (Hodges, 2016)



Unique to military leadership (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014), the CASAL researchers found that 66% of surveyed military personnel, from the rank of Sergeant to Colonel, rated the immediate superior as either a high performer or best/among the best. Additionally, the

higher the rank of the immediate supervisor in terms of position, i.e., Brigade Commander down to Squad/Section Leader, the higher the percentage the surveyed individuals agreed or strongly agreed that their superior was an effective leader. Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al. accepted these results as a positive indicator that, based on implicit leadership theory, “perceptions of leaders [are] impacted by follower’s own idea of what effective leadership is and how closely [the] leader’s behaviors and characteristics align to this image” (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014, p. 20). The report on civilian leadership did not include these latter two data points.

In all three of these areas—characteristics of effective leadership, characteristics of the working environment, and trust--there is a steady, if not bold, trend of lower ratings (or decrease in positive responses) among civilians when compared to their military counterparts, and a complementary increase in negative perception and responses (with corresponding increase in neutral responses). Ratings by RC members are slightly higher when compared to civilian respondents, but still lower than their AC counterparts.

James Clawson states, “Every leadership situation is an ethical situation” (Clawson, 2006, p. 43). In the *Level Three Leadership* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) model, Clawson identifies level one as that stage in leader development that focuses on behavior, or what a leader should do. During level two, the focus of leader development turns to thinking. At this stage, a burgeoning leader considers action and the impact that action has on the surrounding people or situation. Only at this point may a leader start to identify the effect of power and influence. If an individual fails or is unable to progress beyond a level two stage of development, then leadership can only have “a superficial impact . . . leading to perceived lack of leadership and lackluster results” (Clawson, 2006, p. xvii). However, if leadership development goes deeper and explores below the surface of typical education and training, an individual can achieve level three leadership by developing

what Clawson refers to as a “leadership point of view (LPV)” (Clawson, 2006, p. 6). LPV bears no relation to the experience of any position or title, rank or grade, and embodies (a) seeing what needs to be done; (b) understanding all the underlying forces at play in a situation; and (c) having the courage to initiate action to make things better.

To summarize, the Army has a vision and priorities that are specific to ethics (POTUS, 2015; JCS, 2015; DA (ASPG), 2014). The Army has doctrine that provides a documented path to leadership that seemingly tracks with popular literature on leadership development (DA (FM 6-22), 2015). The Army has data that shows a positive perception of leadership reaching into the upper one-fourth of current military and civilian personnel, both in leadership and outside of leadership positions (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014; Riley, Hatfield, Falleson et al., 2014). Then, why does the defense community, and particularly the acquisition community, continue to experience scandals revolving around ethics?

Dr. Owen C. Gaden (2006) proposed that the current approaches to teaching, reinforcing / enforcing, and generally instituting ethics within the government, as well as the private sector, focuses on a fixed set of rules and standards of conduct that are designed to prevent or control lapses in behavior. Core values provide the foundation for these rules and standards, and ethics “is best understood as how human values are translated into action” (Gaden, 2007, p. 110). Value conflicts, or those situations involving ethical dilemmas, arise when non-ethical values, or personal desires, begin to conflict with traditional ethical values of what is right or wrong, and when traditional ethical values conflict with each other. Darleen Druyun was a former U.S. Air Force Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Acquisition and Boeing executive (Darleen Druyun, 2016). U.S. Army Major John Cockerham served as a contingency contracting officer in Iraq and Kuwait between 2004 and 2007 (Cockerham bribery

case, 2015). Both of these individuals had successful and even distinguished careers in public service until one decisive moment that ended with indictments for fraud and other ethics violations.

### **Challenges to Developing Army Leaders with a Better Capability for Ethical Reasoning and Decision-Making**

Kouzes and Posner reported in *Credibility* (1<sup>st</sup> Edition), from original research completed in 1993, that honesty had hit an all-time low with more than 60% of workers surveyed perceiving their management as dishonest, and an overall confidence level in management of 26% (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). By the end of the decade, honesty had rebounded toward a peak. By the early 2000s, and subsequently throughout that decade, honesty again dropped, losing any gains previously achieved. In *Credibility* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Kouzes and Posner summed up the phenomenon with “when times are good, people exhibit more confidence in their leaders; when times are bad, they exhibit less. The more severe the events and the more compressed the timeframe, the more cynical people are likely to become” (Kouzes and Posner, 2011, p. xiv). This quote, in terms of developing Army leadership, relates to establishing a purpose and outcome to which people can connect personal behavior. Expressed as a common theme across Army doctrine, whether times are good or whether they are bad, leadership strives for the confidence to accurately identify purpose in their decision-making and, thus, in their actions (DA (FM 6-22), 2015). Challenging times, such as war, while providing purpose to a defense-related community, can also easily lead to situations where a myriad of psychological traps (Hoyk & Hersey, 2008) become the root causes for unethical behavior.

Richard Gabriel defined ethics as “making choices between competing obligations when the circumstances in which the obligation must be carried out will not permit one to observe

both” (Gabriel, 2007, p. 16). Further, social enterprise and unique dynamics define the standards of ethical behavior--ethics is about applying situational judgment to making choices, and a strong foundation of core values is not enough. Gabriel goes on to postulate that, without understanding why—why this choice is right versus wrong; why an individual might choose to cling to a competing value; or why a person simply chooses to take one action over another—individuals cannot begin to exercise moral reasoning and apply ethical judgment. Decision-making is impaired with respect to being able to aptly identify, consciously avoid, and react reasonably to the pitfalls encountered on a nearly day-to-day basis as the world becomes a more complex arena.

Clark Barrett conducted similar research in 2012 on the topic of ethical codes, and provided a summary of the results of the Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT)-IV, V, and VI reports. The Office of the U.S. Army Surgeon General established the MHAT to, among other things, assess soldier mental health and well-being and examine delivery systems of behavioral health care in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The three reports that Clark (2012) cites are dated 2006, 2008 and 2009, respectively, although the atrocities reported began coming to light in 2003. Addressed neither by Clark or the MHAT is the timing of the questions with respect to the respondents’ term of duty and/or experiences, i.e., the privilege of knowing how a situation has turned out, that could contribute to an alteration of perception of ethics.

Figure 5 is a representation drawn from the statistics cited in these reports representing positive (“Yes”) responses on perceptions of soldiers and marines in executing their duties at Abu Ghraib prison. All six questions relate to ethics and the impact of ethics to behavior. Questions 1-3 represent non-leadership personnel and their personal moral and ethical beliefs, absent specific situations. Questions 4-5 represent action of a moral or ethical nature taken

against prisoners, i.e., action relative to a person's beliefs. Question 6, alone, represents perception of leadership personnel's moral and ethical beliefs. The results of all six questions are staggering, whether representative of actual beliefs and perceptions or those influenced by time and additional experiences.

**Figure 5.** Soldiers and Marines Perception of Duty at Abu Ghraib Prison (represented as percentage of “Yes” Responses) (Hodges, 2016)

Question	Soldiers	Marines
1. Do you believe torture is acceptable to save the life of a fellow warrior?	41%	44%
2. Do you believe torture is acceptable to gain intelligence on the insurgents?	36%	39%
3. Would you treat non-combatants with dignity and respect?	<50%	<50%
4. Do you insult and/or swear at Iraqi prisoners?	>30%	>30%
5. Have you hit or kicked a noncombatant?	4%	7%
6. Did your leadership condone or otherwise indicate that maltreatment of prisoners was acceptable?	66%	66%

As a direct result of the MHAT-IV report, then Army Commander of the Multi-National Force-Iraq, General David Petraeus, issued a theatre-wide call for increased professionalism and enhanced moral behavior. Curiously, the following year's study reported in MHAT-V revealed higher percentages of positive responses to the same or similar questions detailed in Figure 5, i.e., increasingly poor response or decision-making. More disconcerting, after 2008, the MHAT surveys no longer contained questions on ethical behavior, citing potential incrimination to the Federal Government as the reason (Barrett, 2012).

Gabriel (2007) and Clark (2012) both talk about choices made from reasoned judgment and unethical behavior in the context of the battlefield, however, unethical decision-making cannot be justified by an Army that is “stressed and stretched” (Moten, 2010, p. vi). Darleen Druyun did not commit her ethical violations on the battlefield. In fact, the Federal Government began investigations of her behavior well before the United States entered into a war situation

(Darleen Druyun, 2016). Former Major Cockerham's actions did not involve the protection of life or liberty (Cockerham bribery case, 2015). Both gave in to a conflict of values, and both failed to identify and respond appropriately when mired in ethical traps (Hoyk & Hersey, 2008).

Reporting unethical decision-making or behavior also presents a challenge. DoD policy states that "no person will restrict a Service member from making lawful communications to a member of Congress or an inspector general (IG) . . . service members will be free from reprisal for making or preparing to make or being perceived as making or preparing to make a protected communication" (Department of Defense, 2015). For the purposes of this discussion, reprisal refers to an act of retaliation (Merriam-Webster, 2016). The 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey cited fear of reprisal for disclosing suspected violations of law, rule, or regulation in 18% of its respondents (OPM, 2015), with overall trends remaining relatively stable. In the Semiannual Report to the Congress, for the period 1 April to 30 September 2015, the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) reported over 11,300 hits on the DoD Hotline for Whistleblower Rights. The report additionally cited 641 complaints generally involving reprisal and restriction. Nearly 63% of these complaints involved service member reprisal and restriction, with the number jumping to more than 83% when it included civilian employee reprisal cases (Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, 2015). During that same period, the DoDIG also closed 555 complaints. Of this number, 149 followed full investigation (26.8% of closed) and 25 cases of restriction and reprisal were substantiated (16.7% of investigated) (DoDIG, 2015). The number of restriction and reprisal cases substantiated is consistent with OPM's survey indicating fear of reprisal.

William Sims Curry (2010) argues that the government's own policies may present even the most committed of individuals with a challenge to maintaining a code of ethics. A

reasonable threshold for government employees accepting contractor gratuities can escalate over time until the giving and / or receiving of gifts eventually breaks the acceptable limits established by regulation or policy. In response to situations such as these, the Government finds that “zero tolerance policies are difficult, if not impossible, to enforce” (Curry, 2010, p. 51).

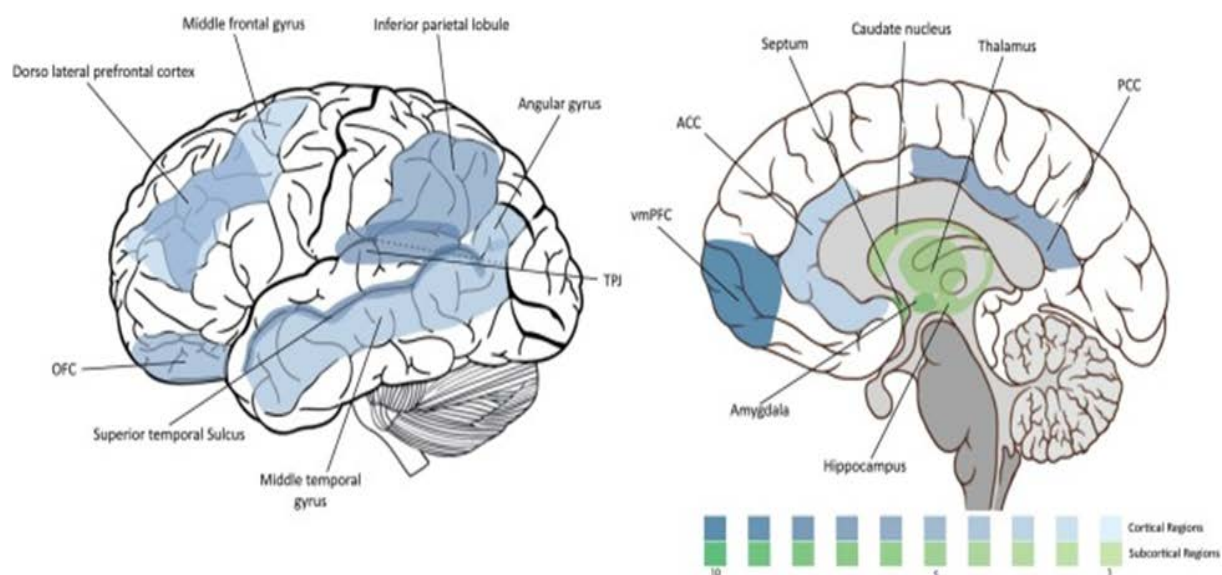
### **Teaching Ethical Reasoning and Decision-Making**

Intelligence is the ability to learn. However, emotional intelligence represents a flexible set of skills acquired and improved over time and with practice (Bradberry, 2015).

Understanding the base structural and functional construct of the brain itself, and study into the development of moral precepts provides a foundation for discussing emotional intelligence.

Figure 6 illustrates the complex neural circuitry and associated morality centers termed the “neuroanatomy of morality” (Pascual, Rodrigues and Gallardo-Pujol, 2013). Pascual et al. attempted to map out areas of the brain that show an association with morality during scenario-based and other visual approaches to questioning. However, findings are still inconclusive and require more research into relationships between basic emotions, individual personality differences, genetic factors and environmental conditions.



**Figure 6.** The Neuroanatomy of Morality (Pascual et al., 2013)

The frontal lobe, and specifically the prefrontal cortex, is essentially responsible for higher conscious thought processes that include a basic set of activities: understanding, deciding, memorizing, recalling, and inhibiting (Rock, 2009). Figure 6, as it represents the areas associated with moral processing, shows this area as consisting of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VMPFC) responsible for emotion mediation; the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) for reward and punishment; the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) relationship to cognitive control and problem-solving; and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) focusing on error detection (Pascual et al., 2013).

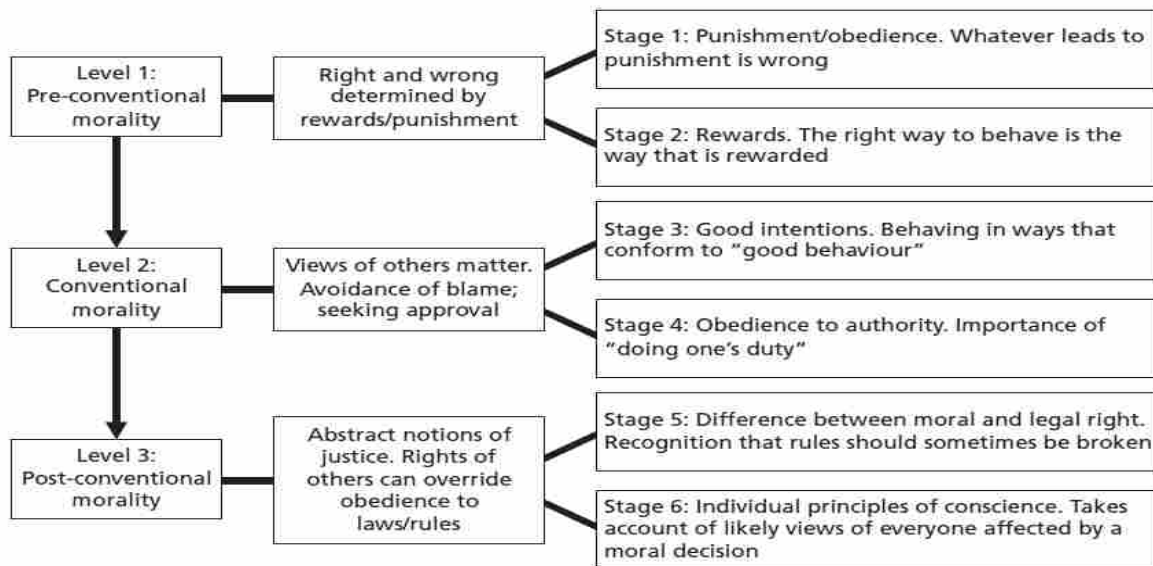
Engaging in conscious thought requires a significant amount of glucose and oxygen, i.e., energy, and thus limits the capacity of the prefrontal cortex. On the other hand, routine activities, for example, those that rely on a constant pattern of repetitive actions, i.e., repeated a minimum of three times to the point of becoming automatic and reducing the amount of conscious thought required, derive from the basal ganglia and consume less energy (Rock, 2009). Illustrated above, and primarily in the subcortical structures and associated with the caudate

nucleus and the thalamus, the areas of the basal ganglia are active during scenarios requiring choice between personal desires and compliance with moral rules (Pascual et al., 2013). The superior temporal sulcus (STS) typically shows increased activity when associated with justice-based versus care-based dilemmas, including decreased moral judgment competence.

Finally, the limbic system, surrounding the basal ganglia and including areas such as the hippocampus, gyrus, and the septum, connect to the prefrontal cortex and represent the emotional center of the brain . . . that part which elicits basic emotions and drives, and automatic responses having to do with danger and reward. In situations where the limbic system is over-aroused, the individual experiences reduced ability to engage in conscious thought, and brain functioning is actually impaired (Rock, 2009). Pascual et al. (2013) also observed that disruption in the temporo-parietal junction (TPJ) could affect a subject's use of mental states in processing moral judgments.

The bottom line: several brain circuits that overlap with numerous complex processes support moral thought (Pascual et al., 2013), which provides a foundation for developing the skill necessary to balance the rational and emotional brains that could lead to effective learning.

Moving on to cognitive development, Figure 7 illustrates Lawrence Kohlberg's three levels of moral development that provide a connection between education, as a factor that can stimulate progression through these levels and create a capability for learning, and ethical reasoning (Khouanphet, 2010).

**Figure 7.** Kohlberg's Three Stage Theories of Development (2001)

Inherent within Kohlberg's theory are three basic characteristics:

- 1) Structure [in which] individuals in any particular stage will display similar reasoning patterns of that stage regardless of the situation,
- 2) Sequential [in which] advancement through stages is specific and in sequence, no skipping of stages, and
- 3) Hierarchical [in which] each successive stage is more highly developed than the previous because it incorporates aspects of all earlier stages (Khouanphet, 2010).

Essentially, in Khouanphet's interpretation, as an individual progresses through childhood to adulthood, that individual also progresses through these levels of moral development, and stages of perception of actions with respect to surrounding people. Kohlberg used scenarios to introduce his research subjects to moral dilemmas between authority and the needs of the individual, and still provides a strong foundation for understanding how personality

develops. Criticisms of Kohlberg's studies include unrealistic scenarios, gender bias, and validity based on how subjects thought they would react to situations versus actual reactions.

Putting some of Kohlberg's theory to the test, Alstott and Simon (2006) studied two demographic groups in the federal acquisition profession (contract managers and project managers), and a third external non-acquisition control group with views on general ethics principals. The common denominator in the three groups was the influence of education and/or training. In a series of general ethics questions, Alstott and Simon's (2006) asked all three groups whether they agreed or disagreed with a variety of statements, and found that combined responses from all three groups on these questions were consistent. Figure 8 illustrates a contrast between the average of all three groups on those statements that represented an individual's personal nature (highlighted in blue) versus those that represented individuals in interaction with or influenced by others (highlighted in yellow). Lack of significant distinction between these two breakout categories implies that people grounded in strong value systems are still susceptible to the influence of others and situations, i.e., reflective of Kohlberg's second level of conventional morality where others' perspectives drive behavior.

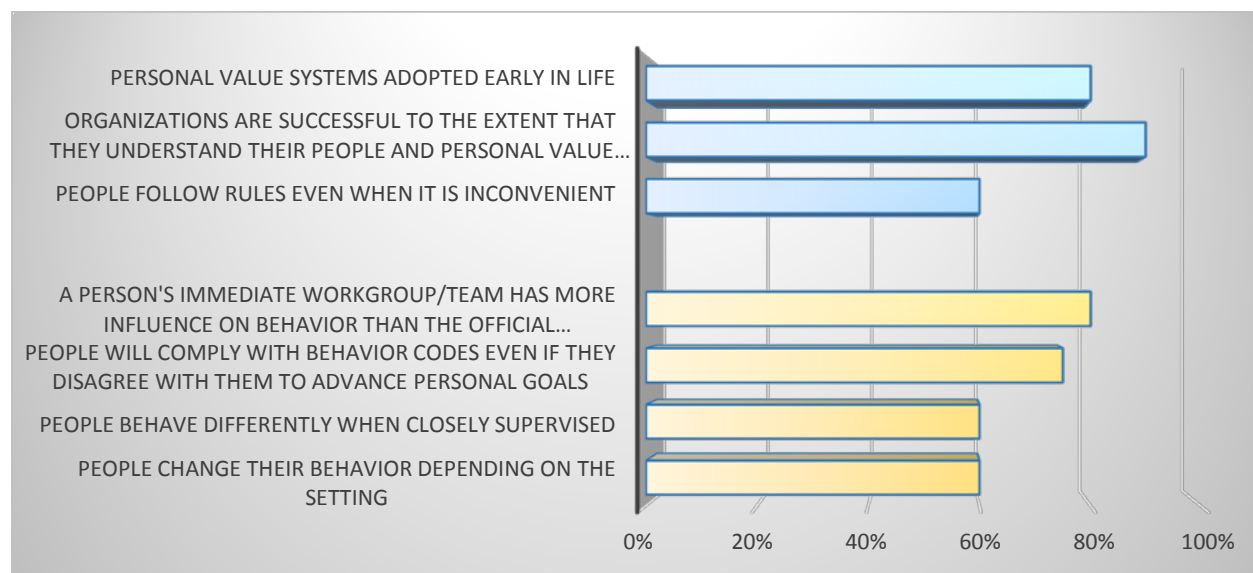
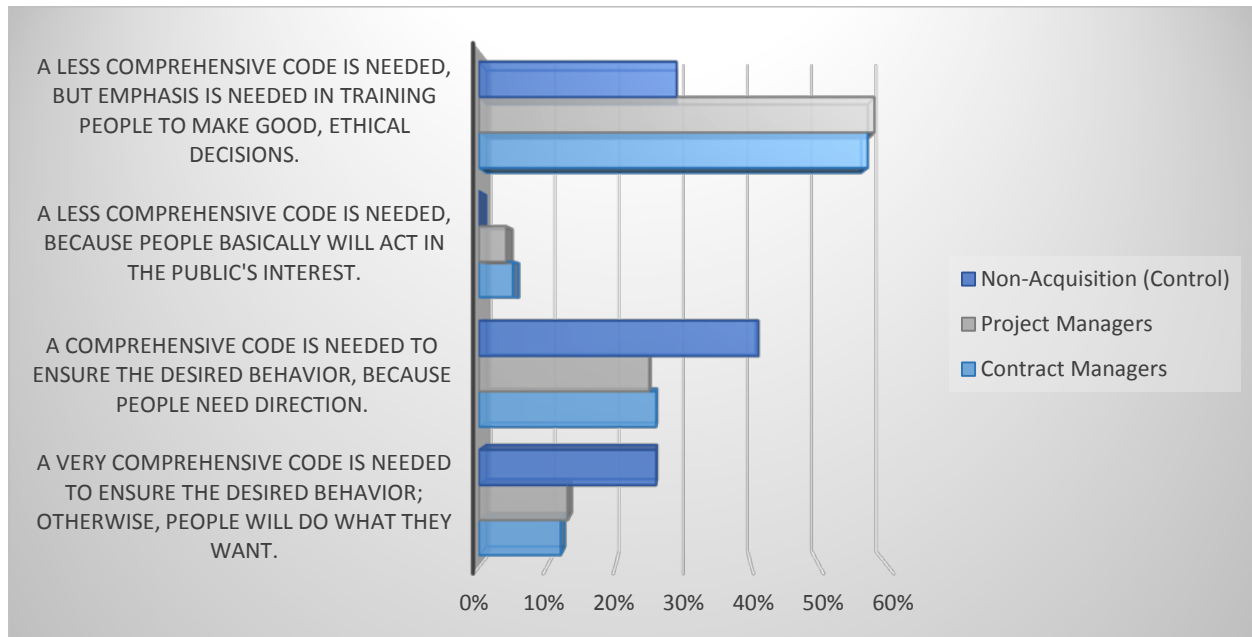
**Figure 8.** General Ethics in the Federal Acquisition Profession (Hodges, 2016)

Figure 9 illustrates the responses from the individuals in the three groups when asked whether they agreed with the statement “the efforts of Congress and the Administration tend to focus on making rules to cover a variety of specific actions” (Alstott & Simon, 2006, p. 140). Across the three groups, respondents agreed that structure and influence toward developing the skills necessary to exert ethical decision-making are necessary, however, with some variance on the magnitude of structure and influence. The non-acquisition control group overwhelmingly believed influence should originate from external sources such as Congressional law making that is beyond the control and ability of the individual, while the two acquisition professional groups considered that more influence arises from internal sources, such as training, that requires an individual’s personal investment (Alstott & Simon, 2006).

**Figure 9.** Perception of the Magnitude to Which Ethical Behavior Must be Controlled  
(Recreated from Alstott and Simon, 2006)



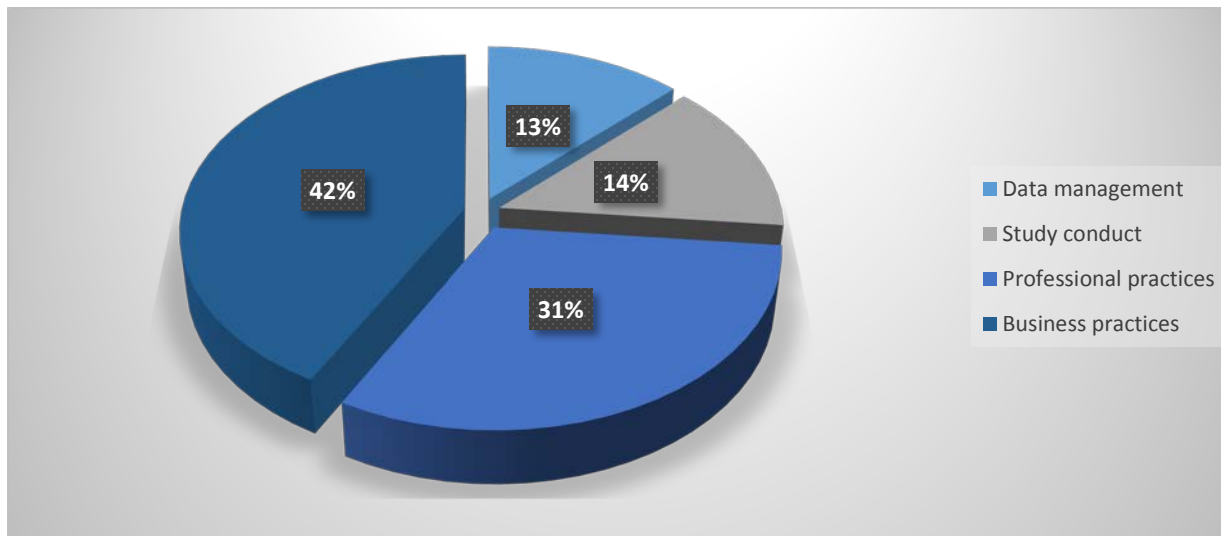
More directly with respect to controlling behavior, Alstott and Simon's (2006) study showed that acquisition professionals believe that less formal control and more training in ethical decision-making is necessary, while the non-acquisition professionals feel that a more comprehensive code of ethical conduct is necessary to control behavior.

To address whether training can have a positive effect on the functioning of the brain in executing moral decision-making, Kligyte, Marcy, Waples, Sevier, Godfrey, Mumford, and Hougen (2007) conducted a study to identify the root of ethical misconduct. This research derived from the two basic hypotheses that "training in ethical sensemaking will enhance researchers' decision-making across different ethical conduct dimensions" (Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al., 2007, p. 5) and "training in ethical sensemaking will result in enhanced application of the metacognitive reasoning strategies during ethical decision-making" (Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al., 2007, p. 6). The Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al. study concluded that training has a

positive impact on ethical decision-making and supports both hypotheses in four significant ethical decision-making domains:

- Data collection and interpretation (Data Management);
- Protecting data, maintaining study conduct and safety standards including research administration (Study Conduct);
- Remaining objective in evaluating work, recognizing professional boundaries, protecting intellectual property, adhering to professional commitments, protecting the public welfare, and professional leadership, to name a few (Professional Practices); and
- Conflicting interests, deceptive and unrealistic expectations, and resource management (Business Practices).

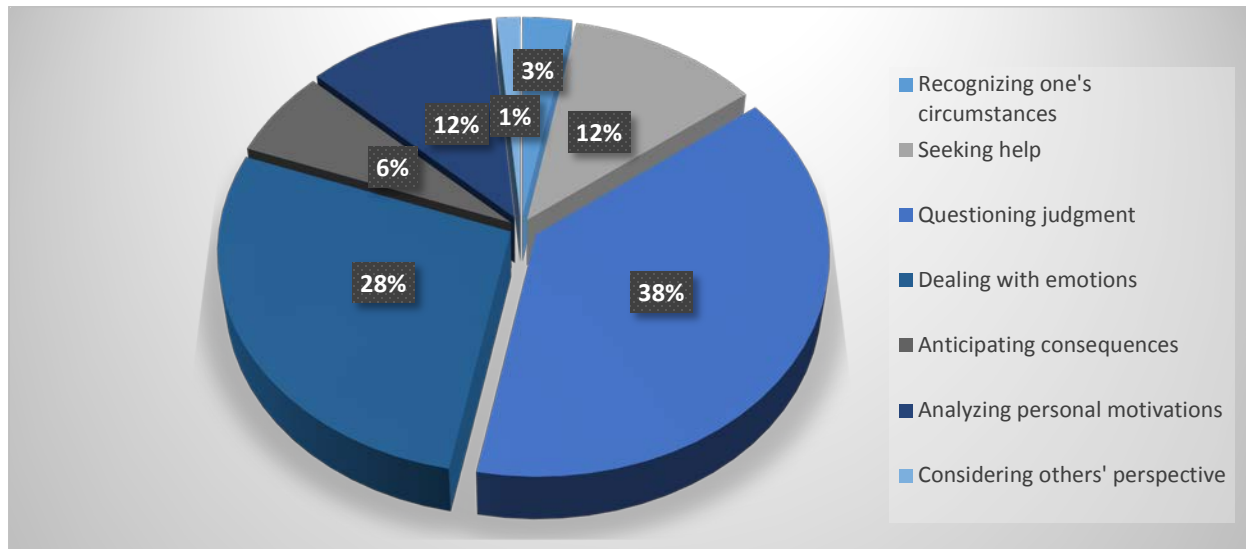
Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al. calculated the significance quotient, which represented pre- to-post differences exhibited by participants on the ethical decision-making measure, noting significant gains in all four of the study's ethical decision-making domains. Figure 10 represents the share of the gains reported by Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al. in each of the four domains from pre- to post-training. The research findings show a greater impact in the areas of Professional and Business practices resulting from an elevated response to training in "metacognitive reasoning strategies" (Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al., 2007, p. 17).

**Figure 10.** Changes in Decision-Making Due to Training (Hodges, 2016)

Klignite, Marcy, Waples et al. went on to delineate seven metacognitive, i.e., higher order thinking, reasoning strategies that represent influences that an individual can be trained to use. These influences can actively control cognitive processes and enhance the learning of skills necessary to make ethical decisions in challenging situations (Klignite, et al., 2007). Figure 11 represents shares of gains in each of these seven broad categories reported from pre- to post-training.



**Figure 11.** Changes in Metacognitive Reasoning Strategy Due to Training (Hodges, 2016)



The three strategies that rely most significantly on an individual's personal, or internal reasoning—namely those strategies that focus on questioning one's own judgment, dealing with emotions, and analyzing personal motivations in decision-making—show the greatest improvement with training. Results indicate that the two strategies that have an external component, i.e., recognizing one's circumstances and considering others' perspectives, remain relatively stable with training. However, the single strategy that requires both an internal and external reasoning component, namely seeking help, actually decreased with training. The researchers considered that this last result might have had a connection to collaboration within the study environment (Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al., 2007).

Secondary findings included individual and training characteristics as influences to the effectiveness of training developed based on this sensemaking model. For example, a congenial personality coupled with self-awareness has a positive relationship to ethical decision-making in data management practices, while neuroticism (characterized by such emotions as anxiety, fear,

worry, and jealousy manifesting in such behaviors as moodiness, frustration, and loneliness) negatively correlates to ethical decision-making in business practices. Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al. also found that prior ethics training, which does little more than introduce individuals to a fixed set of ethical standards and guidelines and takes a rule-based approach, serves to impede participants' ability to apply sensemaking training. Sensemaking training requires participants to consider individual and situational factors as part of decision-making, especially in professional practices. Finally, the Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al. studies indicated that individual and training characteristics influence not just the resultant outcome, but also the process, of decision-making. For example, introversion-extroversion levels can have an impact on whether an individual is willing to seek outside assistance toward making an informed decision, and individuals with a heightened sense of self-awareness and self-deception are less likely to make use of reasoning strategies. Conversely, individuals who acknowledge that training is applicable to them, personally, are more likely to use these strategies.

### **Monitoring and Measuring the Effectiveness of Ethics Training and Education**

In 1993, the U.S. Congress stated that:

- (1) Waste and inefficiency in Federal programs undermine the confidence of the American people in the Government and reduces the Federal Government's ability to address adequately vital public needs;
- (2) Federal managers are seriously disadvantaged in their efforts to improve program efficiency and effectiveness, because of insufficient articulation of program goals and inadequate information on program performance; and

(3) Congressional policymaking, spending decisions, and program oversight are seriously handicapped by insufficient attention to program performance and results (One Hundred Third Congress of the United States of America, 1993).

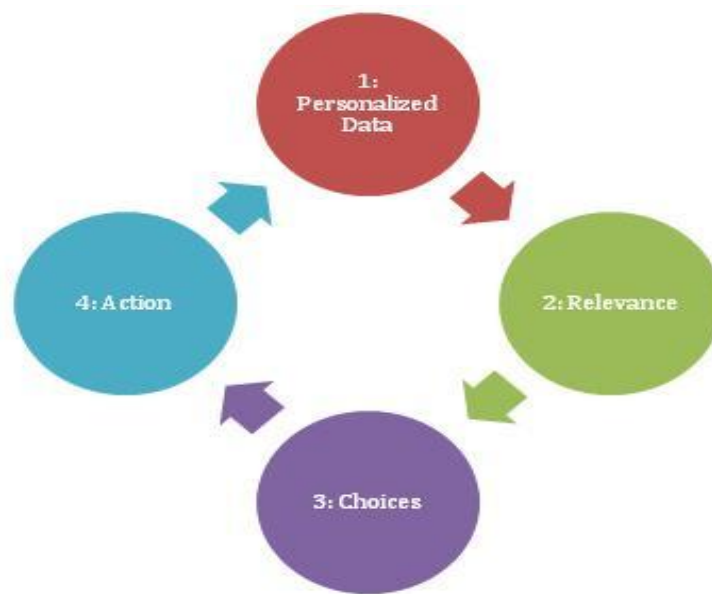
As these broad purposes relate to a discussion on ethics, this paper has thus far identified the vital public need and shown the results of, at a minimum, the Federal Government's lack of attention to an established program of ethics training and education. Without an established program for ethics training and education, the Federal Government has no ability to set program performance goals, measure actual performance against these goals, and provide a public report on progress toward improving effectiveness and accountability (103<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Congress, 1993).

In enacting this Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Congress essentially provided an outline for a system to identify inefficiency and enable a collection of processes to work together to produce something new, (Division of Science and Environmental Policy, 2016), i.e., improve on the internal management of Federal Government ethics training and management. However, as Heraclitus may have said around the time of 500 BCE, "The only thing that is constant is change" (Goodreads, 2016). With respect to systems theory, the ability to modify or control change relies on having an understanding of any underlying factors that will or may either promote or inhibit change, and producing a feedback loop is the key to understanding these change drivers (DSEP, 2016).

Thomas Goetz (2011) provides a surprisingly simple concept of the power of feedback loops. Figure 12 represents Goetz' feedback loop as four distinct and consecutive stages. The first stage is to collect data (or evidence) of a behavior. Next, obtain or provide information in such a way as to effect emotional resonance (relevant). Then, ensure the information emphasizes

a path forward (consequence). The final stage requires measuring, collecting, and analyzing choices over time (action) (Goetz, 2011).

**Figure 12.** Feedback Loop (Goetz, 2011)



Looking back at the GPRA (103<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Congress, 1993), the law provided for a progressive schedule to enact the provisions of the law. The law also required designation of, a minimum, ten federal agencies for pilot projects in performance measurement for the three consecutive years of FY94 through FY96. The GPRA did not specifically call out ethics training and education, nor was any of the pilot projects focused in this area. However, ethics training and education is a microcosm that illustrates the characteristics, qualities, and/or features of the GPRA.

The GPRA required the OMB to develop a strategic plan for program activities no later than the end of Fiscal Year 1997 (FY97), and conduct annual performance planning and reporting by the beginning of FY99. The GAO would report to Congress on the prospects of compliance with GPRA based on the selected pilot projects no later than 1 June 1997.

In 2005, GAO issued a follow-up report stating that, although federal managers reported employing more performance measures from 1997 to 2003, the data showed use of performance measures to improve results and make management decisions for the improvement of programs and results remained essentially unchanged. GAO's purpose in conducting the follow-on review was to, first, identify how agencies could use performance information for making management decisions, and then further identify practices that federal agencies could implement to facilitate use of the performance information. GAO selected and studied five agencies with proven success in use of performance information for decision-making. The report concluded that "creating results-oriented cultures in which performance information is routinely used to make key management decisions will require the sustained attention and commitment of top agency leadership" (Government Accountability Office (GAO-05-927), 2005, p. 33). Further, GAO observed in this report on general uses and practices across the five study agencies that represent universal theory, stating that other agencies could adapt these practices across programs throughout the federal sector.

In 2008, a Panel on Contracting Integrity reported to Congress on 21 initial actions identified for implementation during that year. Included under the title of Sustained Senior Leadership, the Panel cited "performance plans for all senior contracting leaders in the Department, whether under an SES Pay for Performance System or NSPS, specifically include an integrity or ethics objective" (Department of Defense Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L), 2009, p. 10). Further, one of the recommendations for change was to establish a department-wide program for value-based ethics, stating that "DoD has a robust and active rule-based compliance program but not a value-based

ethics program . . . the importance of leadership [is] to sustain an ethical culture, and performance expectations” (p. 55).

Then, in 2012, DoD contracted a private source to develop an implementation plan to integrate a values-based ethics program with the DoD’s current rules-based compliance program (EthicsOne, Inc. & Ethics Resource Center, 2012). EthicsOne, Inc. & Ethics Resource Center recommended periodic measurement of program effectiveness.

Yet, in a 2015 report on ethics and professionalism, GAO charged DoD with having failed to fully address and execute either of the 2008 or 2012 recommendations (Government Accountability Office (GAO-15-711), 2015). GAO further charged the DoD with failure to provide adequate assurances concerning the need for a targeted values-based training program. GAO’s findings in this report were consistent with the 1993 GPRA and 2005 report on internal controls and performance measurement, and indicative of a failure to establish or maintain a viable feedback loop such as that espoused by Goetz (2011). GAO found that military services are not holding management accountable for performance evaluations or ensuring that military personnel have adequate opportunities to participate anonymously in command climate surveys and 360-degree assessments (reflecting the Evidence stage of the feedback loop). The GAO review was limited to military personnel, and thus silent on civilian performance evaluations and access to surveys and assessments. GAO also found that general and flag officers are not receiving feedback on survey or assessment results (Relevance and Consequence stages). Finally, GAO found that services are not using internal control standards that require metrics to measure progress over time, or standards and metrics are ineffective (Action stage).

## **Conclusions & Recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

The research breaks down the initial question of “Can Ethics be taught?” to five components that focus on developing and maintaining ethical decision-making within Army leadership (Program Executive Office, Ground Combat Support Systems, 2015). The first component involves reconciling Army ethics to meet objectives for national security. Ethics stands out across not only the National Security Strategy (POTUS, 2015), but also the National Military Strategy (JCS, 2015), Army Strategic Planning Guidance (DA (ASPG), 2014), Army Operating Concept (U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2014), and the regulation on Army Strategic Readiness (DA (AR 525-30), 2014). Every one of these documents emphasizes the importance and priorities for developing leaders who are committed to an ethical and expert profession of arms. Army doctrine also contains the attributes necessary for developing the adaptive and ethical leaders of tomorrow such as ethical decision-making. Words such as credibility, trust, honesty, integrity, and character with many fitting definitions, appear throughout not only Army guidance on leadership development, but elsewhere in the referenced studies and literature on ethics. These sources are evidence of the perception, that trust develops over time; is conveyed rather than taken for granted based on position or title; inspires a positive attitude; and increases a subordinate’s willingness to work toward a shared vision and values, rather than against it.

Therefore, if these words represent where leadership development needs to go to achieve national security goals, the next logical component of the discussion on the teaching of ethics is developing of effective and ethical leadership. Effective leadership relies on the credibility of

trusted leaders; and developing trusted leaders relies not only on building competence to execute the mission, but also personal character and commitment to Army values (DA (FM 6-22), 2015).

The results and conclusions of the CASAL lead to a partial answer to the PEO GCSS question “Can Ethics be Taught?” (Riley, Hatfield, Fallesen, & Gunther, 2014). One conclusion drawn from an analysis of the CASAL research is that the military culture and continual emphasis on developing leadership capability, from entry through all the ranks, at least contributes to the higher ratings by and for military leaders versus their civilian counterparts. Leaders embody and exemplify effective leadership with behaviors, including ethical decision-making, that build trust in the organization. Subordinates notice and identify with these traits and characteristics to begin to connect ethical behavior to effective leadership. Subordinates will learn and behaviors will align more often with observed behaviors believed to represent effective leadership, hence, the increase in trustworthiness and ethical behavior trends with higher rank/grade. Essentially, people learn by good example, then teach good behavior through their own actions (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014; Riley, Hatfield, Falleson et al., 2014).

Another conclusion from analysis of the CASAL data indicates that, where there is less emphasis on, or less opportunity for, direct observation and reinforcement of good behavior, there is less of a perception of trust (as represented in part by ethical considerations) and effectiveness in leadership. Leadership development begins early in the military rank structure, and is reinforced / enforced on a daily basis in the AC workplace while it may only be intermittent in the RC workplace (performing duties only part-time versus the full-time AC). Developing leadership in the civilian workplace, on the other hand, typically begins late in the grade structure and sometimes only after an individual achieves a leadership position. The training is progressive from basic to continuing education for senior leaders; however, the



Department of the Army Office of the Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel (2006) calls out ethics in only two of the 11 Civilian Education System (CES) course descriptions. Within the Army Acquisition community, ethics training consists only of a mandatory annual briefing.

A last conclusion from CASAL may be that, as actions of an individual move beyond their personal control, i.e., involve more interaction or influence from others, the more challenge there is to maintaining a standard for integrity and character.

Kouzes and Posner's studies (2011) reinforce the CASAL data. Perception of effective leadership, and at least ethical grounding, requires a focus on developing leadership characteristics early in a career cycle, continual reinforcement/enforcement of behavior that represents integrity and character in within the working environment, and formal emphasis on ethics throughout progressive training curriculum. A focus on developing ethical reasoning and decision-making as part of leadership development can have, over time, a positive impact on perceptions of trust, and thus leadership effectiveness in both military and civilian environments. Followers emulate those characteristics that they perceive are effective (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman et al., 2014; Riley, Hatfield, Falleson et al. 2014). The military provides a reasonably stable and consistent structure in terms of training and emphasis on values, from the lowest ranks to the highest—it creates a condition where a kind of muscle memory can develop. The longer an individual remains within that structure, the more they increase their exposure to positive influences and thus their confidence in their leadership. One possible explanation for why CASAL data shows civilian leadership at a lower point than military leadership is that civilian leadership development is not grounded as firmly in a foundation of training and emphasis on values.

Clawson's (2006) describes level three as the stage where leaders learn to assess required action, understand all the underlying forces at play in a situation, and have the courage to initiate action to make things better. Clawson's assertion supports the conclusion that training and emphasis on values do not provide as firm a foundation for civilian as for military leadership. Kouzes and Posner's (2011) six disciplines, or steps for earning and sustaining credibility, are distinctly visible in the description of "leadership point of view" (Clawson, 2006). Achieving the third level of leadership development and steps for earning and sustaining credibility begins to sound suspiciously like the path the Army lays out for developing character (DA (FM 6-22), 2015).

One premise of this paper is that, the Army has failed to find the key to teaching leaders the necessary skills for making ethical decisions, and then sustaining that behavior in the face of any number of challenges . . . moving from learned ethics to practiced ethics. Dr. Owen Gadeken (2006) provides one example in which a system of a fixed set of rules and standards of conduct that focuses on preventing or controlling lapses in behavior does not consider a gap left by failure to incorporate values then translated into action. Reviewing the actions of Darleen Druyun and former Major John Cockerham lead to a conclusion that insufficiently developed ethical judgment results in the inability to identify those ethical traps that Hoyk and Hersey (2008) present. Leadership development left to a fixed set of rules or standards of conduct for preventing or controlling bad behavior is leadership development that fails to consider judgment and choice (Gabriel, 2007; Barrett, 2012; Moten, 2010). Without considering judgment, it becomes difficult to define expectations, align values with hiring decisions, develop policy for managing ethical situations, and integrate scenario-based training and support systems for developing ethical reasoning and building ethical organizations (Gadeken, 2007).

The next component of the discussion is the challenges in developing Army leaders with a better capability for ethical reasoning and decision-making. Leadership development, like anything else, is susceptible to the peaks and valleys associated with conditions and events outside of the control of individuals. An obvious example is the movement in and out of war zone deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq over the course of many years. None of the research indicates adjustment to the task of leadership development to account for continual churn in the lives and missions of both Army military and civilian personnel, or refusal of mere acceptance of poor response as an excuse.

Gabriel (2007) believes that a set of rules or standards of conduct are not enough. Training ethical behavior in terms of what not to do is not enough. Ethics is about making choices, recognizing competing obligations, understanding the “whys” of behavior, and developing the skills to exercise moral reasoning and apply ethical judgment. Modern day hero, Marcus Luttrell, provides a prime example of successful military training stating, “We train for war and fight to win” (Luttrell, 2007, Chap. 1). Though Luttrell refers to the physical fight, Army doctrine effectively applies this mantra to training to make ethical choices, overcoming competing obligations, and understanding why people need to do what they do so they can develop skills for better decision-making (DA (FM 6-22), 2015). Barrett (2012) shows how the military services have failed to consider the aspect of war in the current training regimens. Finally, the Federal Government itself maintains a system that supports, or at least does not prevent, reprisal for doing the right thing for fear of being branded a whistleblower (DoDIG, 2015) and rationalizes poor decision-making because expectations are otherwise unreasonable or unenforceable (Curry, 2010).

Teaching ethical reasoning and decision-making is a broader question than what the PEO GCSS proposed. Consider whether ethics taught is really ethics learned, and how does the Army ensure that ethics learned is ethics practiced? Dr. Travis Bradberry (2015) provides a distinction between intelligence—the ability to learn—and emotional intelligence as the capability to learn and improve by practice a flexible set of skills. Gaining insight into how individuals who are trained in leadership and decision-making, i.e., learned in the foundations and concepts of ethics, can lead to an understanding of how these same people can still end up in a dilemma of unethical proportions, i.e., without the skills to make an ethical decision in a challenging situation.

A very fundamental understanding of the “neuroanatomy of morality” (Pascual et al., 2013) shows that morality, and ethical decision-making by extension, is a function of the entire brain at work. Different parts of the brain work differently. However, targeting training to develop and appropriately exercise the various parts of the brain can reduce certain behaviors to routine activities and, then, conserve needed energy to apply conscious thought to challenging and complex situations (Rock, 2009). To summarize Rock (2009), learning to balance the rational and emotional sides of the brain can have positive effects on behavior and ethical decision-making.

Kohlberg, as summarized by Khouanphet (2010), and similar to Clawson (2006), focused attention on stages of moral development, and linked education and applied training to abstract notions of justice and individual principles of conscience as a means by which people can achieve higher levels of ethical reasoning and decision-making. Close inspection of Kohlberg’s Level 2, Conventional Morality—that stage of development in which a general interpretation of society’s views provides the foundation for how individuals come to be able to recognize and

conform to the rules and the expectations of others (Khouanphet, 2010)—shows a condition that represented by a fixed set of rules meant to control behavior.

Reflecting on Kohlberg's theories, Alstott and Simon (2006) found that three study groups (two key professional groups within the federal acquisition system, and a control group of non-acquisition professionals) shared similar views on general ethics principals. Only the two acquisition professional groups believed that less formal control and more training in ethical decision-making is necessary. In contrast, the non-acquisition professionals felt that a more comprehensive code of ethical conduct is necessary to control behavior. The distinction to be drawn from this research is that professionals whose responsibility relies heavily on day-to-day ethical decision-making believe that ethics can be taught, and once learned can position the individual to act sufficiently on that training. Those outside this type of profession believe that people practice ethical behavior through external rules and control mechanism (Alstott & Simon, 2006). The studies performed by Alstott and Simon as well as those by Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al. might also indicate that typical approaches to ethics training actually act as a constraint or impediment to ethical behavior.

One conclusion from Alstott and Simon's (2006) study is that, generally, people grounded in strong value systems may still be susceptible to the influence of others and their situations. However, people in positions exposed daily to ethical dilemmas, as in Federal acquisition professionals, have quite a different perspective on whether, and from where, sources of influence to decision-making processes can have an impact on behavior. By extension, the Army's attempts to influence behavior, through limited training in ethics, has effectively caused leader development to stagnate with respect to teaching the skills necessary to apply ethical reasoning to decision-making.

One example of training to the limitations in developing ethical reasoning skills is “ethical sensemaking” (Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al., 2007). Ethical sensemaking can be taught, and be effective in enhancing decision-making across a variety of dimensions of ethical conduct by applying metacognitive, i.e., higher order thinking, reasoning strategies. However, Kligyte, Marcy, Waples et al. (2007) also point out that individual personality and training characteristics can influence and affect the outcome of training. If the approach to training and the target audience for that training have an impact on the success of the training, then the training itself must be adapted.

The final component, once the Army accepts that people can learn ethical reasoning and decision-making, is monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of ethics training and education as a critical element to this discussion. Basic systems theory addresses change as the one thing that everyone can accept as beyond individual control. In systems theory, the only way to be successful at modifying and/or controlling the influences of change is through feedback loops (DSEP, 2016). Thomas Goetz (2011) provides a basic model for understanding and developing feedback loops based on a circular and continuous progression through stages of evidence, relevance, consequence, and action. The examples provided throughout this paper in discussing the first four components of the basic question resonate within Goetz’s (2011) four stages.

Within the GPRA of 1993, Federal lawmakers recognized that improving effectiveness, accountability, and internal management required agencies to establish and measure performance against a set of identified goals (103<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Congress, 1993). The Panel on Contracting Integrity 2008 Report to Congress charged DoD with establishing a department-wide program for value-based ethics and establishing performance objectives for senior leaders that included objectives for ethical behavior (Department of Defense Office of the Under Secretary of Defense

Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L), 2009). Finally, a 2012-contracted report recommended periodic measurement of effectiveness shown in an integrated values-based ethics / rules-based compliance program.

Despite the continued acknowledgement of a need for performance measurement, specifically with regard to values-based ethics program, GAO found that DoD had accomplished very little by 2015. Aside from training select DoD personnel in 2013 and establishing a renewable position for a Senior Advisor for Military Professionalism in 2014, DoD has ceased all further action toward establishing an ethics program that could/would result in fostering an ethical culture with an emphasis on ethical principles and decision-making and achieving targets for higher standards of conduct. Further, the Senior Advisor for Military Professionalism has yet to yield milestones or information relative to assessing status or progress toward achieving major tasks (GAO (GAO-15-477), 2015). Though compelling, the question of why this failure has occurred in the face of overwhelming data and information as to the need and value of such a program is beyond the scope of this paper.

In twenty-three years of establishing plans and milestones, and a playbook of how to achieve positive results in using performance management to effect change, the greatest failure has been in not taking monitoring and measuring effectiveness seriously. Without monitoring and measuring, there is no feedback loop. Without a feedback loop into an established values-based ethics program, there is no means to ensure continual development of leadership skill and capability at ethical reasoning and decision-making.

Yes, the Army can teach ethics. Yes, Army leadership can acquire knowledge in ethical reasoning and decision-making. However, without means and ability to execute, sustain, and

reinforce a rigorous ethics education and training program that resonates with all military and civilian components, the practicing of ethics will always be a challenge.

### **Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1.** Reassess the Army vision, mission intent, and approach to ethics education and training of its present and future military, civilian workforce and leaders. The recommendation, similar to those proposed by Gabriel (2007), Moten (2010), Barrett (2012), and the Panel on Contracting Integrity, may include reassessing the Army's code of ethics to go beyond mere rules or compliance standards for conduct.

**Recommendation 2.** Support ethics as a program of record, including it in every Program Objective Memorandum (POM) and Program Evaluation Group (PEG) budget formulation cycle. Treat ethics training and education no differently than any of the Army's other programs in terms of its contribution to form, fit, and function to achieve national security, and therefore, deserving of the functional resources necessary to ensure a robust capability. Include regular assessments of status toward achieving strategic readiness tenets (SRT) and indicators that drive trends toward both near-term and future acceptable readiness levels.

**Recommendation 3.** Establish the Center for Army Profession and Ethics (CAPE) as the center of gravity for ethics education and training horizontal and vertical integration and synchronization across Army agencies, with coordination and cooperation as needed across the entire Department of Defense.

**Recommendation 4.** Establish the capability and capacity to identify and correct functional gaps to ensure the highest quality of ethical reasoning and decision-making. These functional gaps may include:

- Collecting raw data from multiple sources;



- Assessing and analyzing this data to reach reasonable and achievable conclusions;
- Developing the technical capability to store and enhance wide-spread retrieval of data;
- Establishing and empowering partnerships to leverage and exchange academic research;
- Collaborating with multiple government agencies; and
- Formulating vigorous, adaptable, flexible world-class Army solutions.

**Recommendation 5.** Design and develop a progressive approach to training and educating starting with the basic level (onset of Army military and civilian service) to build a strong foundation in ethics and values. Research shows that ethics training that does not reach beyond introduction to a fixed set of ethical standards and guidelines, and takes a rule-based approach, impedes the ability to apply individual and situational factors to a decision-making process. Training and education should align to career stages and reach the most advanced and senior levels (General and Flag Officers, and the civilian Senior Executive Service) to establish and reinforce / enforce skills, enhance ethical reasoning, and increase the number and complexity of reasoning strategies for ethical decision-making.

**Recommendation 6.** Develop tools, such as a practical guidebook, challenge sessions, and peer coaching (McNamara, 2016), that not only teach, but also help people sustain the use of ethical decision-making strategies in everyday settings.

**Recommendation 7.** Regularly assess and adapt training methods, content, etc. to current events, environmental and generational conditions. Ensure training and education programs remain rigorous, tested at every level, and then continuously reinforced.

**Recommendation 8.** Create and sustain a results-oriented climate that leverages performance measurement information in making key management decisions. Such a culture requires top agency leadership's continuous attention and commitment. However, it emphasizes accountability of individuals versus whole organizations. Enacting more laws, regulations, policies, etc. that punish the entire workforce diminishes the general will to maintain the most ethical of standards. Exercising personal accountability in addressing ethical violations without the requisite driving forces may be a topic of further study.

**Recommendation 9.** Establish and maintain internal control standards that require continuous assessment of metrics to identify problems and their root causes, measure progress over time toward achieving sustainable goals, and provide continual feedback on effectiveness. Effectiveness of ethics training as represented by the incidence of ethical violations comes to mind. By establishing measurable objectives, ethics practitioners to convert data to actionable information with which to adjust and adapt the effectiveness of education and training.

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**Acronyms**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Description</b>
103 <sup>rd</sup> U.S. Congress	One Hundred Third Congress of the United States of America
AC	Active Component
ACC	Anterior Cingulate Cortex
AOC	Army Operating Concept
ASPG	Army Strategic Planning Guidance
AR	Army Regulation
ASR	Army Strategic Readiness
BCE	Before Common Era
CAL	Center for Army Leadership
CAPE	Center for the Army Profession and Ethic
CASAL	Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership
CES	Civilian Education System
DA	Department of the Army
DAC	Department of the Army Civilian
DLPFC	Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex
DoD	Department of Defense
DSEP	Division of Science and Environmental Policy
EQ	Emotional Intelligence Quotient
FM	Field Manual
GAO	Government Accountability Office

GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
IG	Inspector General
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
LPV	Leadership Point of View
MHAT	Military Health Advisory Team
NMS	National Military Strategy
NSPS	National Security Personnel System
NSS	National Security Strategy
OFC	Orbitofrontal Cortex
OGC	Office of General Counsel
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PEO GCSS	Program Executive Office Ground Combat Support Systems
PL	Public Law
POTUS	Office of the President of the United States
RC	Reserve Component
RCR	Responsible Conduct of Research
SES	Senior Executive Service
SOCO	Standards of Conduct Office
SRT	Strategic Readiness Tenets
STS	Superior Temporal Sulcus

TACOM	Tank- automotive and Armaments Command
TPJ	Temporo-parietal Junction
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
US	United States
VMPFC	Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex
WRI	Whistleblower Reprisal Investigation

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